

MIKE SATURDAY LECKY

THE LOOSE TEETH PRESS

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**BRUCE
SPRINGST
ZINE**



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Don't stop

Admission

Will be to that
proceeding

**BRUCE SPRINGSTINE NO. 1
WEEKEND IN THE VOID**

6 AM

The security office looks exactly like ever other security office I've ever been in. Am I in the mall in Ottawa right now? Circus Circus? No, these fuckers are obviously taking their job way too seriously, I'm still in the fucking airport in Toronto. They've stripped me down to my underwear and left me in a weird cell with nothing. *Jesus Christ. I think, without my notebooks I'm going to lose track of hours. I spit on the wall and it's all pink and weird. Hours? You've lost track of your ability to count! Fuck you! Wait, was that me, or them?*

The two overgrown sloths that run the security office start throwing questions at me like I'd drank a liter of plastic explosive rather than gin. "What are you doing in the airport tonight?"

"Airport? Jesus Christ, I thought this was the Marriott hotel! I'm getting married in the morning, fellows. How on earth I managed to make my way to the airport I..."

"What were you doing to that woman?"

"Making a move, Kojak. What, you've never seen smooth moves before?"

The bigger guard grins and looks at his friend. He thinks he's got me: "What are you doing putting the moves on a woman if you're getting married tomorrow?"

"You know the old saying, boys, one more dance before they cut your feet off, eh? Just having a little fun, one last time."

This doesn't seem to have the desired effect on the Lady, and in retrospect I'm not sure I like it that much either. I'm worrying about my next move and thinking about maybe getting one of those frog sandwiches for 11 dollars because I'm pretty fucking hungry. I haven't eaten in the past 20 hours or so and what was left of that got left in the subway, and then I kind of lose my balance or lose my ability to hold myself up or I've been slapped in the face—all I know is I'm sort of falling over to my right and it doesn't really occur to me to put my arms up or anything so I smack my head pretty hard on a food court table and then that's it, I'm just laying on the floor, in the fucking food court, trying through the pain to tilt my head to the right a bit so I can see up this Lady's skirt.



7 PM

I've been haggling with the stewardess over whether I should be allowed a 5th plastic cup of rye and ginger ale for what seems like half an hour when the answer finally hits me. "Alright! Listen, forget the rye, forget the ginger ale. You're right, I've had too many of those, I'm starting to stink, I'm starting to sweat it out even in the air conditioning. What you need to do is take this little cup and get rid of the ice. Then fill it to the top with dark rum and hand it back. I haven't had a single glass of rum today, and no one is going to miss it because the stuff tastes like piss and molasses. Fill it up and hand it back before I get sour."

It's Saturday after all, and past noontime wherever you are, definitely in Vancouver and I think maybe we're approaching seven o'clock in Toronto because we're starting our descent and I've got to be in by 7:30, late plane or no, because I've got a Plan, and it's going to be completely out of whack if we don't get down to solid ground ASAP.

The idea is: 36 hours in Toronto, from touchdown to take off, 7:30 Saturday night to 7:30 Monday morning. In between which we have Canzine, Canada's largest zine and small press fair, and oh, about 31 other hours, which will be filled with literary schmoozing, talk of book deals, and heavy, heavy drinking.

A vacation exactly 36 hours long. Now I've been on drunks longer than that, and really, is this a vacation or a business trip or some seriously mad last minute decision that I'm going to regret any minute now? I mean what kind of person, let alone what kind of Publisher of Books, decides on a Wednesday that on Saturday they need to be half way across the country to attend a zine fair? Can this really be justified? The expense and the time and the, Jesus, the Carbon Credits! Who the fuck is in charge of the Carbon Credits, how much is it going to cost me, how many trees am I going to have to personally plant, and how much for the boxes of chopped up dead trees I'm dragging around? All of this, and still just at the baggage carousel. Things are starting to get hairy, and that's when I see Joey.

He's pushing through the crowd and waving. He looks exactly the same, same hair, same stubble, same purple hoodie. Maybe not. Maybe I just always picture him in that hoodie: Hung over on a train getting the hell out of New Orleans, drinking a mixture of red wine, cola and Red Bull behind the mall in Toronto, holding a copy of his first book in a photograph in some alt-weekly somewhere. We get on the bus-Joey has exact change for both of us. He's only had a few days notice that I was coming but the man is prepared.

"Here's a Coke. I've got a bottle of whiskey in my bag. A bigger one of vodka in the fridge at home. Last weekend I was in the US and I managed to procure a quantity of pharmaceutical grade tequila, which is in the freezer."

"This is going to be good. Think of the fucking medicinal qualities of that tequila. It's like I'm on a retreat or a fucking cleanse. We're in."



The food court has one open shop, a French sandwich kind of place with coffee, and I guess that's why everyone else is here, moths and flame. I find a seat and sit down, pull out my boarding pass and look it over. I'm still so drunk that it looks like Greek or HTML or ... I run my hands over it, it's not Braille. I give up and tuck it into the breast of my jacket, arranging it like a little paper pocket square, and start tucking my shirt in, brushing off my sleeves. When I look up I realize these food court flunkies are all staring at me. It's clear they've just never seen a well dressed man with a fake moustache and hair like a dead gerbil primping himself in a food court at four o'clock in the morning. I smile and make eye contact with them, and then slowly put my index and middle finger into my mouth, pulling them out moist, and then thrust them quickly into the hole of my other fist. It's the filthiest gesture I can think of.

My eyes hit on one woman, maybe late thirties, who isn't looking away. She's smiling and maybe winking, but I have a feeling she's just got the same drunk eyes that I'm giving everyone else. She seems like good company though, so I make my way over. Sad-Eyed Lady is just finishing up on the speakers overhead, so I say:

*My warehouse eyes, my Arabian drums,
Should I leave them by your gate,
Or, sad-eyed lady, should I wait?*



8 PM

At the house Joey produces two very fake looking oversized test tubes full of a bright blue liquid and two real looking capsules full of white powder. "These energy drinks say they're illegal for kids. They must be good. A good start, anyway. Oh, and I found these pills." *Technically the bottle of whiskey on the subway was a start, I think. But who am I to argue? I eat my pill and drink my blue juice.*

We've got about thirty minutes now to sit on the couch and stare at the white walls and just wait. Joey claims his apartment is too hot and wanders into the kitchen to sit in front of the open fridge. It's maybe 10 degrees outside and his house feels normal to me, but Joey has a habit of freaking out. This isn't too early for him so I let him go.

There is a huge pile of records in one corner so I dig through them and pull out a couple to put on. This isn't Joey's stuff, that's for sure, it's too good, too well edited, there's no Tupac. Besides that I'm almost positive Joey's afraid of the fact that sound comes out of grooves in a disc of plastic. I dig out *Blonde on Blonde* and put the needle down right at the beginning, I Want You, and click on the repeat switch so that side B will just play and play and play.

"What the hell!" I hear from the kitchen. The voice is all weird and echoey like I'm high, or maybe like it's coming from deep the inside of a fridge.

"I'm feeling lonely, you bastard! Let me just lay here and feel a few feelings in this heartless fuck of a city."

Joey's standing over me now, and I'm lying on the floor staring up his nose. "Jesus, look, you've really been hit, eh? I've never seen you so sentimental before. Maybe this wasn't such a good idea. I can't have you getting feely on me, we're going to need to keep it together this weekend if we're going to make it through."

"You're right, you're right." I'm mumbling, then there's a giant slamming noise and I jump upright and kick over the coffee table, "Jesus fuck! What the hell was that?!"

It's not all
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life is bz
when you're
sucked...

Sat
8:44 PM
we do not
feel normal
in line
at Screens

OK it's time to rationalize. Maybe these bastards are staring at you because you're the only thing around here to stare at. Maybe there aren't too many faggy little Men of Letters in wrinkled suits on the last train out to the burbs on Sunday nights. Maybe it's not that often people get on the subway with sharpened on moustaches. Still, I feel like there's got to be something I can do to protect myself in this situation, something to ward these shithats off.

As he train lurches and starts rattling off from the station I bump into the seat in front of me and the answer gives itself up easily. The slam makes me throw up on the seat in front of me, and it's awful. It looks as though I've thrown up the last two days worth of food, which wouldn't actually be this much matter, so it must be food and bits of my insides. There are weird streams of colour running through the generally taupey slush, and my god, there is a lot of it.

Quick on my feet even in this kind of situation, I turn to my left and puke into the aisle, then lean back and give the seat behind me some love. "There," I smile to myself, "let's see them try and get through *that*." At the next stop the things get out and switch to the next car up, I can see them through the glass end of the cars and I see one of them still staring at me so I smile and wave. A few more stops and I'll be out at the airport, home free.

2 AM

I'm out on the street with vague directions to head left until I see a subway station. If I hurry I can still make the last train to the end of the line, catch the last bus from there to the airport. I do the sort of half-walk-half-jog Terry Fox Shuffle of the too drunk and do little pirouettes to avoid telephone poles and buildings when I start veering too close.

The street is mostly quiet, and wet in a way that reminds me of home. I'm walking this thin line between the streetlights and their reflections in the puddles, just trying to keep it together. I keep patting my pockets: wallet, yeah, plane ticket, yeah, over and over again like they're just going to slip out when I'm not looking, and that's about when I notice a much more feasible problem.

Behind me are 3 or four hoodie clad youths. I can't be too sure how many without looking back in a very obvious way that says, "Hey man, are you guys going to rob me?" It's past 2 and I don't really want to ask that question because I don't want to hear the answer. These greasebags are laughing and shit talking and when I see the subway station I pay and get down to the platform maybe a little too eagerly. But the assholes follow me down, and they're sitting only one set of seats away waiting for the train and one of them keeps looking at me. There's no one else down here and when the train comes there's no one else in the car besides us. I'm getting that anxiety attack again, this time without the pills, this time it's because I'm dead fucking meat.

10 PM

A few minutes later we're at the gates. Giant twenty or thirty person swirling line ups of teenagers are everywhere. "I can't handle this," says Joey, "we've been herded here, I will not be penned in."

We walk to the front of a line and I pull out 3 twenties. "Excuse me!" I shout. There are a lot of people here and a lot of noise, but I'm being much too loud and I can't figure out whether it's on purpose or not. "We need two tickets right away, it's an emergency!" The ticket lady looks at the front of the line, the line looks at the lady and they both shrug. We get our tickets and I turn to Joey, "Easy," and we push on into the swell of the arena.

"Jesus fucking Christ, we've made a huge mistake." Inside the lines of teens and preteens are maybe 200 strong, all six of them. There is a haunted house, a haunted graveyard, a school maybe, who knows. The main non-lineup area is a giant haunted Hot Topic. The lights are all orange and purple and pulsing, and I feel them worming their way in past my ribs. I'm having some minor heart palpitations but Joey is seriously wiggled. I sit down and take in the weird moaning and the lights and the hay baled off video game area and watch Joey's eyes darting around. It's been about five minutes.

"Alright, you gooned out bastard, we'll leave. Let's go for a walk." Outside we sell our tickets for \$20 each and start walking back into town.

People are starting to show up so we sit back down behind our makeshift table and start to work our magic. "Look at this lot," Joey whispers, maybe not to me, "These people are goons. You think I want this goon money?"

Jesus Christ you're off your rocker," I say. "Here, I didn't want to have to pull these out so soon. I was saving them for the plane ride home, but here, you take two now, to ease out. We're going to pull you right out of this." I fold two shiny orange pills into his palm, real discrete like, and give him solid eye contact and a head nod.

"What are these things, barbiturates?"

"Downers, calmers. Serious Easers. I'd be surprised if you weren't giving these phoulsh bastards all back rubs in half an hour's time." Joey eats the pills, which are obviously orange Tic Tacs, and washes them down with a big gulp of whole milk, which he's been buying by the pint at the bar.

"Good. Good. Lots of milk, man. Don't need to be tasting those nasty little bastards." He finishes gulping and smiles and gives me a thumbs up. "Now we're in business," I smile. "Now we're in fucking business."

As dumb as that wigged out bastard is he's right about one thing. The people pouring in here are seriously off. Goons, yeah. Trolls. Dogmen. Librarians. It looks like a deck of Magic cards came to life in the basement of the Gladstone Hotel and have come upstairs for air.

There is now a healthy number of people milling around, and they're all stuck in this awful pattern, pay at front, walk into ballroom, look disdainfully at the shit dicks to your left who reek of alcohol, then push into the one way rat maze of tables, up-over-down-over-up-over-down till you're over by the banana women. God help you if you want to go back a few tables to pick up something you missed or if you're a speedy peruser. Every once in a while you see one of these poor souls fighting backward through the throngs and your heart can't help but go out to the bastard, it's like standing on shore watching a ship bashing against the rocks.

3 AM

Outside Joey is rubbing his bare arms to keep warm. "Fuck man! We can not go back in there. There are women in there that won't leave me alone. One was grinding on me and I danced with her for a while, then I said, 'I'm going back to my friends now, you seem very nice but I'm extremely high and I feel uncomfortable.' Does that seem unreasonable? No. Would she leave? No! This other girl, her friend I guess, came over and the two of them were dancing with me and thing I tried to leave again and they starting making out, which was OK, except that girl was just staring at me the whole time. Just jamming her tongue into this girl and giving me eyes like... I dunno man; I've never seen those eyes before."

"I know dude, I could see that shit from the couch, those were Sex My Face eyes, and those women were evil succubi! Did you see those lights? Did you feel those fucking lights man! This entire fucking bar is a vampire. We need to get the fuck out of here. Rally the troops!"



1991

The fair is set up like this: bottom floor, row upon row of 4" x 8" plywood tables with books on them. There are a couple of strange athrooms, handicap ones where there's too much space between everything. They're tiled and high-ceilinged and when you shout bounces around without losing much and comes right back at you all warbled and hollow. There is an epic staircase that takes about 20 minutes to climb, and then a second floor with more 4" x 8" plywood tables covered in paper things, then a space for a stage. Two rooms off to the right look to have videos playing or Live Art or something similar but I never get a chance to see; as I start to look into the first room Joey comes out, eyes wide, grabbing my arm. "We are not going back in there, ever. No matter what anyone says." I can't tell if he's broken something or the movie spooked him or if he's just puked in the corner, but he is genuine about not going in there and I can't fuck with the man in such a weakened state, so we head back downstairs.

Back on Bloor or whatever god damn street and we're down to three. Beth has picked up someone from the bar and Xavier is off to gayler climes in hopes of the same. No one is worried about Roadie Wike but me, he's at home Emily says but I have visions of him slumped up against a toilet in the women's washroom, dead and almost pale white, all the blood drained from his once mighty moustache. It's a hard picture to shake, and while Joey and Emily walk up ahead I'm just sort of stumbling behind them drinking from a pint glass of whiskey we commandeered from the bar and saying to myself over and over, "sent to draaaaaiiiiiiiiiiiiin... secret destroyerrrrrrrrs..." It's not pretty and I'm starting to be afraid that I've lost my mind or even worse, the Focus. I can't find the notepads anywhere, only a pen, and I'm having trouble even checking-my hands feel huge and get caught in every pocket I put them in. I'm spilling whiskey from the pint every time I pull on my clothes and let out an "Awe fuck!" that makes Emily sort of jump no matter how many times it happens. I can't stand the idea of losing all our notes so I start taking them in shorthand all over my body. There are Notes To Self, good starter paragraphs, weird cryptic maps that at this point could lead anywhere. I draw an old school tattoo style compass on my right hand and add an arrow pointing northwest, along with an inscription: RETACE STEPPS. I'm halfway through another note to self (DON'T TAKE NO SHIT FROM GMS) when we pass by the karaoke place.

"Wait, does this look open to you guys?"

"It says open til 4AM."

"What time is it?"

"Three thirty."

"Perfect."

12 PM

We finally get to the venue and somehow we're still early. Because I planned this whole thing about 3 days before it happened, all the tables are sold out and so on the phone Joey promised me he had arranged for us to share a table with someone else. I'm dry heaving a little bit so I hang back and let Joey explain: Oh hey, I'm Joey, we're going to be sharing a table with Dave, and we'll just go and sit there till he shows up. What Joey *actually* says, "Hey I'm Joey Comeau, I think you have a table for me." I look up quick, suppress another gag.

"Uh... nope, I don't see Joey Comeau on here."

"Oh, try Mike Lecky then." She scans the whole two pages again.

"No, no mike either."

"Try Loose Teeth Press" Joey says, and at this point I'm about ready to pay my five dollars to go in and just look around. I can see there's a bar in there and there's a man behind it pouring drinks.

"Oh, you know what, that one sounds familiar, hold on." Joey and I look at each other with that sidelong conspiratorial look. There is no possible way Teeth is on there, they were out of tables 2 months ago and we tried to get one on Wednesday. We've never even been to Canzine before.

"Well, it's not on here, but that must be a mistake, I *know* that's supposed to be on here." We rock even more sidelong glances as she leads us into the hall and sets us up a makeshift table right near the entrance. It looks sketchy as hell and seems like the randomest placed table ever, but turns out to be prime real estate all day. We thank her and tell her to stop apologizing, "No no, everything's fine, we're good, we're good," and for the first time we actually are.

More than
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B. C. R. P.

8 AM

We fucked up.

We lost 1/9th of the entire trip with only a few scattered notes from the green book to guides us. We don't know anything about time stamps or chronology or even what some of them mean or say, what we do know is that it's eight in the morning and we're back on Bloor (or wherever) eating eggs and potatoes like everyone else. It's time to cool down, time to Get Normal; we've got a god damn zine fair in an hour or two.

9 AM

At the house Joey changes. I didn't bring any clothes, just books and a second tie, so I swap over to the purple wool one and stare at my face in the mirror. We're maybe halfway through and I'm looking haggard. I stretch and pull at the bags under my eyes. I think about washing my face, but don't.

10 AM

Joey knows where we're going for this thing and I don't. He says it's an easy walk, so we pick up the 50sh pounds of books and head down the street.

11 AM

"We're approximately half way there," Joey announces. I think about how hard it would be to split his head open with this box of novels, and weigh that against how hard it would be to sell them without him.

11:38
He gets to a
point where...